THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DR. RAJA RAMANNA): (a) while there are reports that the Sri Lankan Government are assessing the feasibility of establishing a Naval Base at Kachcha Thivu Island, no construction activity by Sri Lanka has come to the notice of this Government.

(b) The Government of India keep a close watch on the developments in the neighbourhood that may have a bearing on the security of the country and take adequate measures to ensure full defence preparedness at all times.

(c) There is no proposal to undertake the Sedhu Samudra Project as a Defence Project.

Vesting powers of search and seizure with forest officials

780. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to vest forest officials with police powers of search, seizure and arrest of poachers; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b). Section 50 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides for vesting in Forest Officers powers of search, seizure and arrest of any person against whom there are reasonable grounds for believing that he has committed an offence under the Act, unless he furnishes his name and address and otherwise satisfies the officer arresting him that he will duly answer any summons or other proceedings which may be taken against him.

Villages without primary schools

781. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of villages which do not have a primary school at present, Statewise, and what was this number during each of the last three years; and

(b) whether there is any plan to cover these villages for primary education; if so, what are the targets for the current year and for each of the next three years, Statewise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA): (a) The state-wise figures of habitations with a population of 300 or more that do not have a primary school within walking distance of 1 km. are given in the enclosed statement. (*See* below). These figures pertain to 1986. Later statistics are not available.

(b) State Governments are expected to ensure that all habitations with a population of 300 (200 in case of tribal, hilly and desert areas) are provided with a primary school. Opening of primary schools is a continuous process undertaken by the State Governments taking into account factors including availability of resources in the State Plans. The Central Government neither opens such schools nor does it have any scheme to support such activity.